

A

REVIEW

Of the STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, February 24. 1709.

THE Gentlemen that are every hour in the Day calling Names, and crying out against the Conduct of the *African* Company, are the most mistaken of any Men in the World, in their Resentments at the Author of this Paper, and that on two Accounts : (1.) Because the Author, if he knows any thing in the World better than another, *it is this* ; how with a Temper, perfectly easy and unconcern'd, to take no notice at all of those Resentments, nor put the least Value upon any Man's Displeasure, *however Great*, for which he has no just Ground. (2.) Because this calling Names and Recriminations are nothing at all to the Case in hand. Really, Gentlemen, this Cause is to be decided like most of

the intricate Cases of the World, by Reasoning not by Clamour ; it is the baffled Argument, not the strong Reason that deviates into Clamour ; when Arguing is not Calm, it is no more Arguing, but Scolding.

Pray, Gentlemen, will you tell us, what is this to the preserving the Trade to *Africa*? — If the whole Business of both was but to expose one another, and see whose Backsides are blackest ; what would the House of Commons have to do in the Case, truly nothing but this? —

To settle an Exclusive Company. If it were only to have it be exclusive of such People, whose awkward Politics have ruin'd it already : This seems natural to the Trade, but much more natural to the Contests between the Parties.

When

When therefore all the Particulars are ripp'd up on either side, and all the lower Tyre of Guns, I mean Ill Language, are fir'd off, the Case is but just where you began——It is no matter, who is or is not blameable in Things past: But let us see who is or is not qualified to secure the Trade for the Time to come.

Since my last, I met with some People that yet object against the Article of the Joynt-Stock, because, say they, all Exclusive Companies are Arbitrary and Tyrannical, and are unsufferable Grievances in Trade, mere Monopolies and depriving free Subjects of their Right.

Perhaps these People expected me to enter here into a tedious Argument, to prove the Right of Exclusive Trade; but I shall observe the Rule my self, which I prescribe to others, *viz.* Not to spend the Time to no Purpose——I may grant all you say in that Case, *for Argument sake*, tho' I do not really allow it, yet if this Trade is necessary to be carried on and preserv'd, and cannot be preserv'd but in an Exclusive Trade: Then you must take it with all its Tyranny and Arbitrary Circumstances, for the Trade must not be lost——And it will remain only to see, whether an Exclusive Company may not be so establish'd, as to have all their Tyrannick and Arbitrary Power limited and taken away: And of this I shall speak by it self.

For it is a Maxim in Theology, *That Restraint from Ill is*

Freedom to a wise Man: Necessary Restraints cannot be called Tyranny, for so all the wholsom Laws of a Country may be Reproach'd with the Scandal of Bondage——Thus 'tis Tyranny to make a Law to preserve my Life, and I may complain of Bondage, that I cannot have the liberty to hang my self, without forfeiting my Estate to the Queen: There is no question, but the Tyranny of all Company's may be Restrained by Laws and Limitations: And to say, we must have no Exclusive Companies, because Exclusive Companies have Tyranniz'd and acted Illegally; is to say, That because Drunkards by excess lose their Reason, and on a Chance or hasty Shower drown in a Puddle, that therefore we must have no Rain.

I might send the Critical Enquirer into this Part, to the Plantation-Merchants; and when we are enquiring who are best quallify'd to support the Trade, let them ask——Pray, Gentlemen Planters, who is it gives you Credit for *Negroes* in the Colonies, who supplies you with Slaves, and takes it out of the next Crop, or perhaps the second or third? Who leaves a Stock in the Colonies, and assists the Planters to carry on their Business? Is it the separate Traders, or is it a Company? Let them ask the Present Company to show their Books, and see if they, tho' with a crippled Stock and a decayed Credit, have not had 150000*l.* at a time owing them in the Colonies for *Negroes*, and what may not the Advantage to the Colonies be, when

When a Company shall be establish'd with a Flush Stock, and the Trade be four times as great as it has been for these ten Years past, while the separate Traders neither do, or ever did, can, or ever could give any such Credit ; but as they are ever Rivalling one another in Buying, so they are in Selling, to take the Head of the Market, and under-sell for Prompt Payment.

And here I cannot but note, and I believe my Observation is very Just, That it is not only the Contention between the separate Traders and the Company, but between the separate Traders and themselves, their vying and struggling one with another, and pushing to dispatch one before another : This has made them sell to Loss, buy Extravagantly, and expos'd their Folly so much, that even the very *Negroes* of *Africk* have learn'd to Play upon them, and make a Market of their Necessity.

Nothing can prevent all these Confusions of Commerce, but a uniform Dealing, limited from imposing upon the Traders, either Abroad or at Home, and effectually protected from the Invasions of Clandestine Trade ; to say this cannot be done, is to Reproach the

Parliament, and say, they know not how to make Laws, or the Government, that they know not how to execute them.

Let a Company have but an Exclusive Authority, and that Authority kept Sacred and supported — Tye them Hand and Foot from monopolizing or imposing on any Body ; let a Price upon their Ivory here, their *Negroes* there ; nay, upon their very Gold ; Fetter up their Tyrannick Inclinations as much as you please, they ought to submit to it. 'Tis a freedom to manage the Trade for the General Good, not a freedom to insult Trade, and impose upon the World, that I am speaking of ; but never let us fright the Town with Chymera's : Tell them they will be Tyrants, and therefore shall not be a Company ; like the Old Woman, that whip'd her Boy before hand, because *she said* he would go to the Fair, tho' the Child offered to be lock'd up in the House that he could not go — I may in the Process of this Story, proceed to lay down the Scheme of a Company, for the carrying on this Trade, with such Limitations and Restrictions, as I am perswaded would answer all these Suggestions : But of that in its order.

Of General Naturalization.

THO' I am very full of the Case above, I mean the Trade to *Africa*, yet I could not Dispense with the Necessity I think there is, to speak one Word to another Case, *viz.* Of encouraging Foreigners to plant and settle among us, with their Families — And this is occasion'd by a surprising Opposition, I find it prepared or preparing

to one of the best Bills, in my Opinion, that has been brought into the Parliament this Session, *viz. the Naturalization of Foreign Protestants.*

I will not say that any Bill that can be proposed for a General Good, can be so calculated, as to interfere with no private Interest ; but I would be glad to hear some of the

the Objections rais'd against this Bill, that are founded upon the Publick Advantage of *Britain*, Nationally Consider'd — And must we for ever be pursuing private Aims, and separate Intrest, and neglect the Body in the gross? Will not the general Distemper affect the Particulars in the end of things? How hard is it to get Mankind to take their Eyes off from the Immediate and nearest Object, and remove them to some Things remote that are equally momentous? — This is like an *Ignis fatuus*, which tyes the Eye down, and keeps it so Intent upon the glimmering Cheat, that the unwary Feet pursue Destruction, and the Deluded Wretch falls down a Precipice.

But 'tis in vain to exclaim at the blindness of Mankind, the Business is, if possible to open their Eyes: In Order to which, I would ask a few general Questions, and if possible they shall be such, as shall Command an Affirmative from Every common Understanding.

1. Is the Number of Inhabitants, the Wealth, the Strength, and the Glory of a Nation, or is it not?

2. Does *Britain* labour at this time under a manifest Decrease and a want of People, or does it not?

3. Has a 20 Years War, almost a second Re-peopling of *Ireland*, after the late Depopulation, and the constant transplanting of People to our large and encreasing Colonies, carry'd away a very great number of our People, or have they not?

4. Were we first made Rich by being made Populous, or were we not?

5. Does not our Wealth decline, as our number of People decline, and is it not visible in several Parts of the Country at this time?

These Questions, tho' they admit of no Negative, at least I think so; yet I own they admit of large Comments and Illustrations, and I shall endeavour to give them their due, as I come to them in order.

But, O Ye True *Born Englishmen*, shall I ask you another Question? — Who are you all, and whence came you all? And how long have you been Possessors here? And above all, how honestly did your Fathers come by their Possessions here? Are we not all Sons of Thieves and Robbers? Nay worse, of Traytors? That came hither to help an honest oppress'd People; and instead of helping them devoured them; and now we are for letting no Body share with us but our selves: This is very hard.

Again, next to the Justice of it, Pray where is the Wit of it? — How came we to be Rich and Oppulent, was it the mere Goodness of the Soil? Not at all: In spite of the Goodness of the Soil, We were a poor miserable enslav'd and Laird-ridden People, as they are in some Parts to this Day, with our Vassalage and Villenage, our Wardships, Knights-Services, and *Egyptian* Tenures; when the Commons went dangling after their Landlords, like Hounds after the Huntsman, and the Tenant held the Stirrup to the Squire, the Squire was but Sword-bearer to the Knight, the Knight again carry'd the Colours for the Baron: And thus the *Lord-dane*, indeed well called the *LURDEN*, was the great Idol of the Country; and whence came our Liberty? You may talk of our Ancestors fighting for it, and so they did; the Tyrant Barons against the Tyrant Kings; but who deliver'd us from the Tyrant Barons, whose Bondage was worse than that of Kings, and under which Bondage, a large Part of *Britain* now groans, and calls to us to set her free — I say, it was thus: The Encrease of Foreigners flocking in to us from Abroad: These encreas'd Trade, Trade encreas'd Wealth, and Wealth bought us Liberty: And thus we owe our Present Greatness to that very Thing, which the wise Heads of this Age pretend to oppose.

I shall be more Particular in my next.